



ARTICLE

Putting Fame and Celebrity in a Psychosocial Framework: A Scientific Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In many cultures, reaching fame and celebrity is the most desirable goal and/or fantasy for the majority of society; and this is primarily fueled by the media. Consequently, a multitude of psychological studies have been performed in this field, although a comprehensive psychological theory has yet to be formulated. This article provides an extensive analysis of the bibliography of all psychology articles published in the Scopus database from 1928 to 2022. For accomplishing this, the VOSviewer software tool was used. A total of 1,987 psychology articles were found in the Scopus database, revealing an increasing trend of research in recent years. The fact that most of these articles belong to the field of neuropsychology shows the gap between important research and theory in theoretical psychology. While the number of psychological studies in the field has increased, there have been no bibliometric studies on the state of research and its process. This survey, drawing on the scientific map in the field, will attempt to identify areas that remain neglected.

KEYWORDS

fame, famous, celebrity, psychology, bibliography

Introduction

“Wherever there are people, there is celebrity” (Hammond, 2014). This statement reflects the pervasive nature of fame as a global phenomenon. Throughout history and across cultures, fame has held a prominent position, and many advancements in various fields have been motivated by the desire for recognition

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(Braudy, 1997). It is speculated that even notable figures like Sigmund Freud were driven by their longing for enduring fame when developing their theoretical speculations and innovations (Yalom, 1980/2020). In the contemporary world, the pursuit of fame has become a widespread trend, with almost everyone seeking their moment in the spotlight. As the 21st century began, fame emerged from obscurity like a phoenix rising from the ashes (Rowlands, 2014). Consequently, the intense desire for fame has become one of the most profound cultural phenomena of our time.

Renowned figures and celebrities play a crucial role in this phenomenon, as research suggests that people's desire for fame is often influenced by these prominent individuals (Young & Pinsky, 2006). For instance, in 2006, when children under the age of 10 were asked to write their wish list for International Children's Day, becoming a celebrity ranked the highest (Johnson & McSmith, 2006). In modern culture, fame seems to offer a pathway to symbolic immortality, akin to the iconic photographs and works of athletes, musicians, artists, actors, singers, and scientists such as Bob Roth, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Claude Monet, Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra, Albert Einstein, etc. Through its symbolic defiance of death, fame ensures enduring renown even after an individual's passing (Greenberg et al., 2010).

Comparatively, when examining highly desired values (fame, power, spirituality, and fitness) fame reached the highest rank in 2007, despite being the least desired value in the previous decade. The exponential growth in the desire for fame can be directly attributed to the explosion of communication technologies since the 1990s (Uhls & Greenfield, 2011). Social technology platforms have become fertile ground for cultivating interest in fame, as individuals employ various strategies and exposure methods to share media content and actively compete for audience attention (Rui & Stefanone, 2016). Consequently, becoming a famous person, once seen as unattainable for the average individual, has now become achievable through participation in television programs (Maltby et al., 2008).

In today's world, fame and its associated concepts, such as "celebrity," "star," and "influencer," have a significant impact on human life. These components determine many different aspects of human life, to the point that the death of a famous person or celebrity is referred to as a "celebrity supernova" (Boyce & Dove, 2022). Researchers have identified famous people and celebrities as the focus of their audience's desires, ideals, and fears (Mercer, 2013). The importance of fame is such that ordinary people, especially young people, use it as a means to validate their existence (Holmes & Redmond, 2010). As Leo Braudy notes in his historical study of fame, even a small moment of media exposure "promises acceptance, even if we commit the most heinous crime because that's how people will finally know you." This way, we are saved from the living death of being unknown (Braudy, 1997).

In recent years, academic research on celebrity has expanded significantly (Turner, 2010). From a psychological perspective, some believe that the need to be seen is strong and primal (Greenwood et al., 2013). This is evident in the fact that most people imagine themselves in scenes of fame, such as those seen on television, in theaters, and in movies, as part of their daily lives (Rockwell & Giles, 2009). However, becoming famous is no longer considered unattainable for ordinary people. Many

individuals can easily achieve fame by participating in a television program (Maltby et al., 2008). The growing dependence on the digital realm has given rise to a new category of public figures known as social media influencers (SMIs), who are also referred to as micro-celebrities, YouTubers, Internet-famous individuals, and Instafamous personalities (Shabahang et al., 2022). Celebrities are prominent figures in the public eye and enjoy significant public recognition. In today's media landscape, female celebrities are often featured prominently and embody the prevailing standards of beauty within media culture (Brown & Tiggemann, 2022).

From the perspective of the relationship between psychology and fame, fame can have various effects on mental health. Reputation and fame issues are prominent in many acute psychological problems that include body satisfaction (Grabe et al., 2008; Groesz et al., 2002; Tiggemann, 2011), bipolar disorder (Johnson et al., 2012), certain personality disorders, e.g., narcissistic (Greenwood et al., 2013) and histrionic personality (Ferguson et al., 2013), mass shootings (Allwin et al., 2022; Bushman, 2018; Langman, 2018; Silva & Greene-Colozzi, 2019; Wills, 2019), and even suicide (Brewis, 2008). On the other hand, an important discussion has emerged about why humans are attracted to celebrities and how celebrities and famous people have a significant psychological impact on individuals. Some believe that we are attracted to celebrities because they serve as a counterpoint to our own psychological deficiencies (Rojek, 2001). Indeed, this issue has significant effects on the daily lives of ordinary individuals as well. For example, the overwhelming desire for fame has reached an intensity whereby ordinary individuals, on their way to work, imagine themselves on the stage of a show (television, theater, cinema, etc.) every day and feel afterward downcast when such illusion evaporates. For instance, most American people feel upset simply because they are not well-known (Rockwell & Giles, 2009). Nonetheless, there is a shortage of psychological research in this area, and this theoretical paucity can be explained by two major reasons. Firstly, it is roughly impossible to empirically account for people's interest in fame; secondly, it is quite difficult to conceptualize fame as a construct (Maltby et al., 2008).

Despite the fact that fame has become a critical phenomenon that influences everyone in contemporary society, there is no coherent theory on fame in the field of psychology. This is surprising given that the primary objective for many individuals in the new generation is to achieve fame.

The importance of developing a scientific map in the field of psychology has increased significantly. Research conducted in 1999 investigated the field of psychology from 1950 to the end of the 20th century by analyzing the most frequently used terms. This research aimed to provide explanations for crucially important questions such as "Where has psychology been?", "Where is psychology now?", and "Where is psychology going?" (Flis & van Eck, 2018). Through the collection and analysis of bibliometric data, this research provided insight into item structure area, social networks, and interesting thematic presentations.

Due to the dramatic increase in the number of scientific studies in recent years, researchers find it increasingly difficult to monitor the current literature in their field. In order to properly analyze such a huge amount of data, quantitative bibliometric methods are necessary (Župič & Čater, 2014). These methods can increase the

objectivity of literature reviews by allowing researchers to base their judgments on the collected opinions of scholars working in the field (Župič & Čater, 2014). Bibliometric methods have two main applications: performance analysis and scientific mapping. Performance analysis evaluates the research and publication performance of individuals and institutions, while scientific mapping reveals the framework and dynamics of scientific fields. This information about structure and development is useful when investigating a particular line of research (Cobo et al., 2011). Mapping studies aim to explore research trends, such as publication trends over time and topics covered in the literature, and provide an overview of a specific area that allows for the discovery of research gaps and trends (Petersen et al., 2008, 2015).

Based on the content presented, the aim of this research is to examine scientific gaps by providing an overview of research trends in the field of celebrity psychology, in terms of research topics and methods used. Bibliometric analysis is a popular method used to visualize trends in various fields, including celebrity psychology (Schuengel et al., 2019; Stopar & Bartol, 2018; Zyoud et al., 2018). This method creates a general visual representation of frequently used terms in the relevant domains (van Eck & Waltman, 2011). To achieve this goal, commonly used keywords across all research in the field will be extracted, which is one of the most popular bibliometric methods (Krauskopf, 2018; Moscoso et al., 2018; Sweileh et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2018). The objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive map and bibliometric analysis of terms and frequent domains in the field of celebrity psychology, which can offer insights into previously studied topics and potential areas for future research.

Method

Undoubtedly, the formulation of research questions is of utmost importance in any study. For this study, the following main research questions were identified:

- A. How has fame been psychologically analyzed in the past?
- B. How is fame currently studied?
- C. What trajectory will fame assume in the future?

Additionally, the research aims to explore why such an important phenomenon as fame has not been theorized in psychology. These questions will be thoroughly discussed in the Results and Discussion sections of the research to provide a more precise understanding of the findings.

The data for this study were obtained from Scopus,¹ a comprehensive citation database covering journals in technical, medical, and social sciences from 1928 to 2022. Scopus is larger than other databases, e.g., PubMed² and Web of Science³; moreover, it offers various features that facilitate bibliometric analysis, including author

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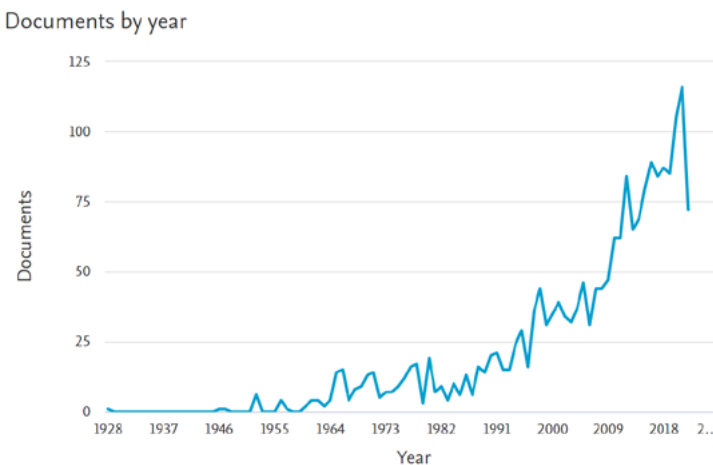
contribution, country and affiliation information, citation analysis, and performance based on source type (Anglada-Tort & Sanfilippo, 2019; Falagas et al., 2007). To visualize and create bibliometric maps, the VOSviewer⁴ software tool was utilized. VOSviewer is widely used in the field of scientometrics and offers an integrated framework for mapping and clustering (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Not only has it been used by the specialized scientometrics community, but also by researchers in other scientific fields, making it a popular choice among researchers interested in scientometrics-based mapping (Li et al., 2021).

For this research, English-language articles in the field of psychology were selected if they contained the words “famous” or “celebrity” in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. The selected articles encompassed various subfields of psychology, including general psychology, miscellaneous psychology, applied psychology, clinical psychology, developmental and educational psychology, experimental and cognitive psychology, and social psychology. A total of 1,987 articles met these criteria. The collected data were then analyzed based on several characteristics, including the year of publication, the main journal, institutions, and countries. Additionally, keywords that appeared at least 10 times in the articles were identified and included in the scientific map for further analysis.

Results

The present study provides a bibliometric analysis of psychological research on the topic of reputation from its inception until the present day. The number of articles on this topic has been steadily increasing since 1928 (Figure 1). The number of articles is projected to reach 116 in 2021, and that excluding articles that may be published during the remainder of the year.

Figure 1
Annual Number of Publications Related to Fame



⁴ <https://www.vosviewer.com>

The trend of citations for the considered articles has been increasing in recent years (Figure 2). Notably, there was a significant jump in 2021, with 4,188 citations compared to 3,254 citations in the previous year. This sudden increase in citations indicates the development and growing impact of work in the field of reputation research.

Figure 2
Citations Trend From 2008 to 2022

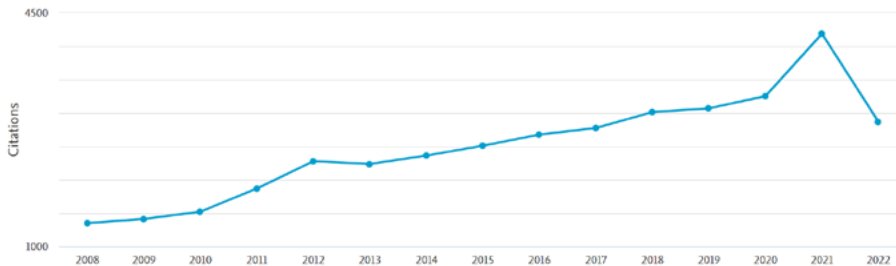
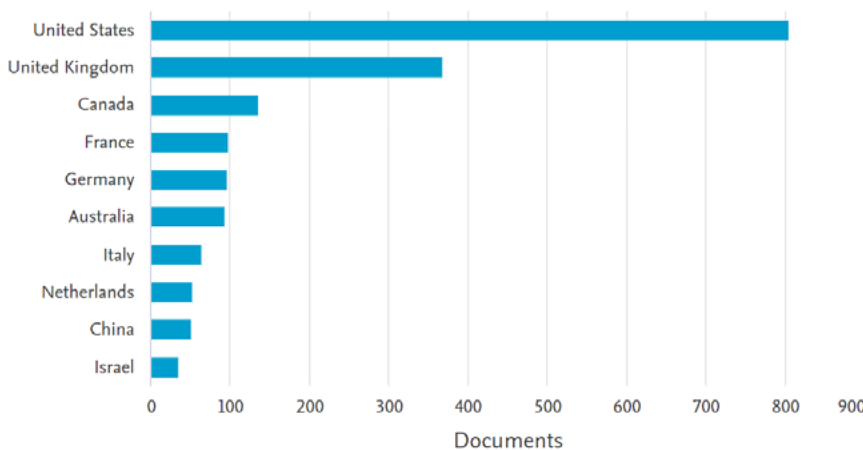


Figure 3 presents the number of published articles on the topic of reputation based on country of origin. The top three countries in this field are English-speaking countries, with the United States leading with 803 articles, followed by England with 367 articles, and Canada with 134 articles. One possible reason for the United States' significant lead in published articles could be the increased importance placed on the issue of reputation in this country (Bushman, 2018; Lankford, 2016, 2018; Meindl & Ivy, 2017; Silva & Greene-Colozzi, 2019).

Figure 3
Top 10 Most Productive Countries



The most active institutions in the field of reputation research are listed from 1 to 10 based on the number of published articles in Figure 4. According to this analysis, England has four institutions, the United States has three institutions, Canada has two institutions, and Scotland has one institution in the list of most active institutions.

Figure 4

Top 10 Most Productive Institutes

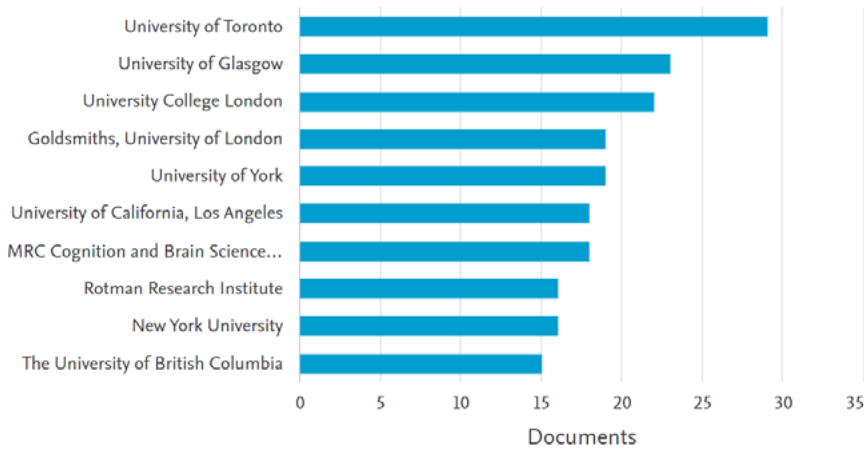


Figure 5 presents the authors with the highest rate of producing articles in the field of fame and celebrity are depicted. Many of these authors are experts in the field of cognitive psychology and neuropsychology, and they have contributed diverse and intermittent work in this area.

Figure 5

Top 10 Most Productive Authors

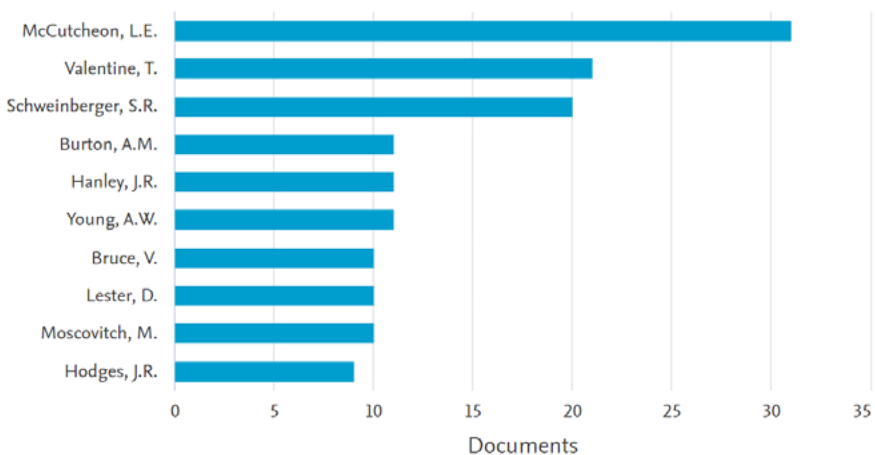


Figure 6 illustrates the process of publishing articles in five prolific journals in the field of reputation research from its inception until the present day. The increasing trend in the number of articles and journals in this field indicates the growing importance of this topic across various scientific disciplines.

Figure 6
Five Most Active Journals According to the Number of Publications

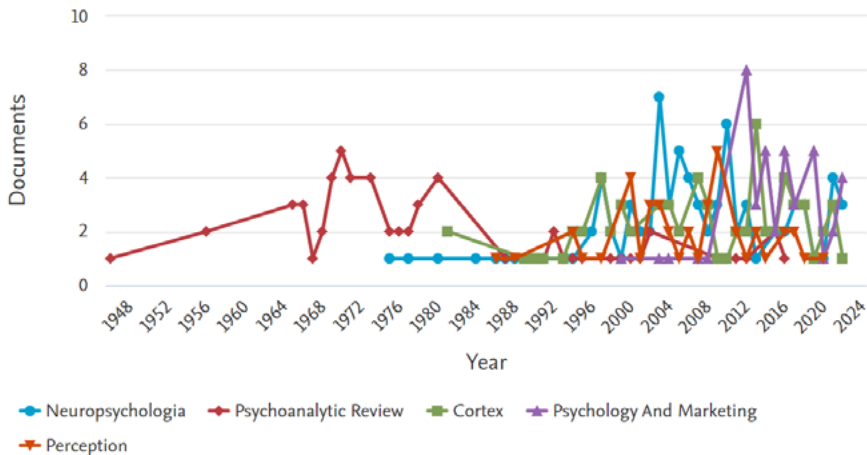


Table 1 shows the most cited articles in the field of reputation research, and all of them have more than 400 citations. It is worth noting that the three most cited articles deal with different topics, and the issue of fame and celebrity is not their primary focus. Nevertheless, these highly cited articles have made significant contributions to the broader field of psychology.

Table 1
Most Cited Articles in the Field of Reputational Research

Title	Author	Year	Journal	Citation
Are humans good intuitive statisticians after all? Rethinking some conclusions from the literature on judgment under uncertainty	Cosmides, L., Tooby, J.	1996	Cognition	704
On the tip of the tongue: What causes word-finding failures in young and older adults?	Burke, D.M., MacKay, D.G., Worthley, J.S., Wade, E.	1991	Journal of Memory and Language	687
Structural encoding and identification in face processing: ERP evidence for separate mechanisms	Bentin, S., Deouell, L. Y.	2000	Cognitive Neuropsychology	521

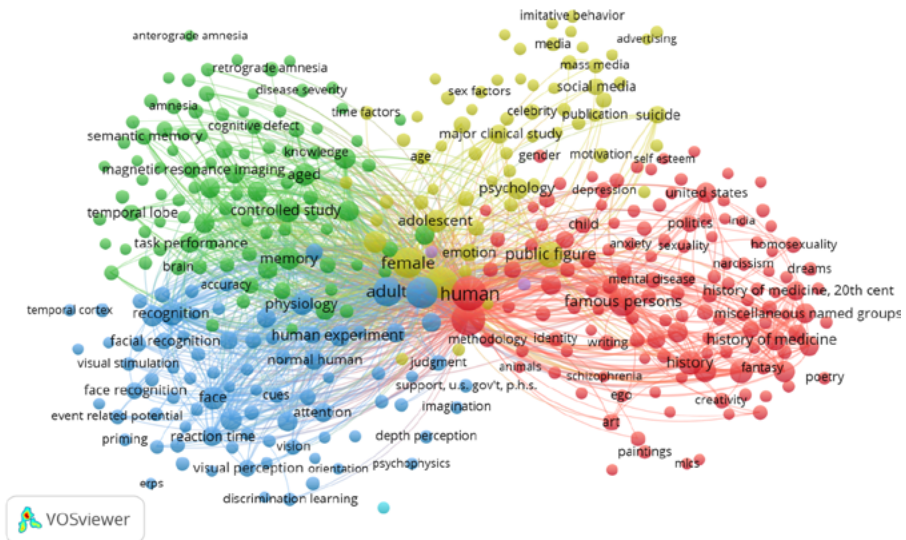
Table 1 Continued

Title	Author	Year	Journal	Citation
Becoming famous without being recognized: Unconscious influences of memory produced by dividing attention	Jacoby, L. L., Woloshyn, V., Kelley, C.	1989	Journal of Experimental Psychology: General	462
Becoming famous overnight: Limits on the ability to avoid unconscious influences of the past	Jacoby, L. L., Kelley, C., Brown, J., Jasechko, J.	1989	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	426

On the basis of the most frequently occurring keywords from articles registered in the Scopus database from the beginning to the present day, the authors constructed a scientific map of prominent research areas in the field of reputation in psychology (Figure 7). The map highlights four different disciplines represented by different colors: red for miscellaneous psychology, blue for neuropsychology, green for cognitive psychology, and yellow for general psychology. These colors indicate the diverse range of disciplines that contribute to the study of reputation in psychology.

Figure 7

Associations Between High-Frequency Keywords of Publications in the Field of Reputation in Psychology

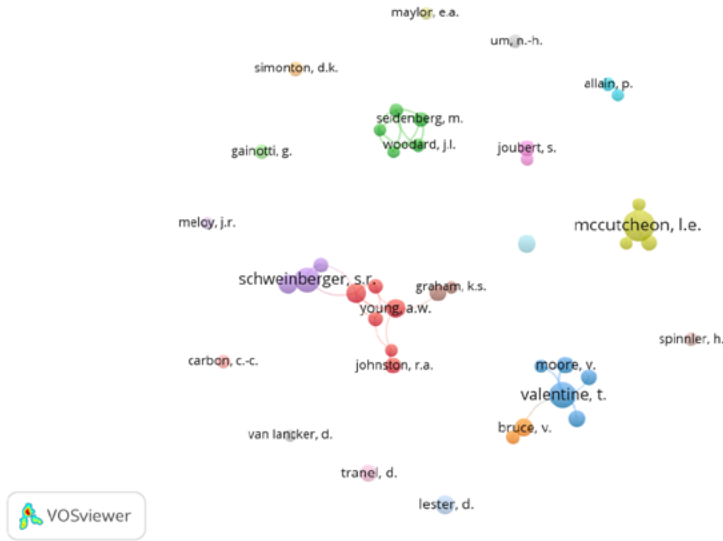


The graph depicting the authors who have contributed the most to the field of reputation research (with at least five articles) and their relationships indicates that there have been limited collaborative efforts in this field (Figure 8). This lack of group

work may be one of the reasons that have hindered the large-scale production of theories in this area.

Figure 8

A Cloud of Nodes Associated With Co-Authors Having Contributed at Least Five Articles in the Field of Reputation Research



As shown on the scientific map, there have been relatively few collaborative efforts among experts in the field of reputation research. It may be necessary to encourage more group work in this area to facilitate future endeavors and promote the development of new theories and approaches.

Discussion

The aim of the current study is to provide a comprehensive overview of research conducted in the field of fame and celebrity psychology. This review can offer extensive information on the production process of articles and their topics. Therefore, this article focuses on a bibliographic review of articles published in Scopus related to reputation psychology. The findings indicate a tangible increase in research in this field, and it is predicted that this trend will continue due to the expansion of media (all types), the Internet, and the culture of celebrities and semi-celebrities. This trend highlights the growing importance of this phenomenon globally. The academic community has used various terms to describe this situation, such as “pandemic” (Marshall, 2010), “celebrity culture” (Cashmore, 2014; Driessens, 2013), and even “celebrity diplomacy” (Cooper & Frechette, 2008; Wheeler, 2016). Evidently, this particular issue becomes more and more important in academic and university environments around the world, thus providing valuable insights into trends in this field.

As mentioned before, the pursuit of fame has significant negative impacts on various aspects of human life. In the context of mass killings, researchers have demonstrated that a desire for fame is often a primary motive for perpetrators of such events (Lankford, 2018; Pew et al., 2019; Sanford, 2014; Wills & Lankford, 2019). Additionally, the desire for fame has been studied in relation to suicide, with findings indicating that some suicides occur as a means to gain attention and achieve fame (Brewis, 2008). The topic of fame is also connected to psychological disorders, particularly narcissistic personality disorder (Aabo et al., 2022; Gentile, 2011; Young & Pinsky, 2006). In the current media landscape, there is a growing saturation of images depicting fame and celebrities, with television, magazines, websites, and blogs constantly exposing individuals to the glamorous lifestyles of others (Greenwood et al., 2013). The expansion of the internet and social media has further fueled the desire for fame and provided a more accessible pathway to gaining attention (Choi & Berger, 2009). The increasing trend of internet usage, particularly on social media platforms such as Instagram,⁵ Facebook,⁶ Twitter,⁷ and others, has made it easier for individuals to gain fame and become celebrities (Marshall, 2010). To describe famous individuals in various fields, different terms have been coined, such as "Internet celebrity," "YouTube⁸ stars," "Web stars," and "Internet famous" (Gamson, 2011; Lange, 2007; Marwick, 2013; Senft, 2008; Snickars & Vonderau, 2009; Tanz, 2008). Studies suggest that individuals with narcissistic personality disorder may engage in various behaviors, both in the real world and on social media platforms, to attain fame and seek attention from others (Bushman, 2018; Jabeen et al., 2020). In recent years, the rise of influential individuals in the virtual space known as "influencers" has grown exponentially; moreover, these individuals are gaining followers by sharing textual and visual narratives about their personal lives on social media platforms (Abidin, 2016).

The findings suggest that the growing phenomenon of fame and celebrity's potential link to mass murder has attracted the attention of various institutions and countries. The United States is the leading producer of articles in this field, which may be due to the serious harm that fame and celebrity can pose in relation to mass murder. A study reported 909 mass murders in the United States during the 20th century, emphasizing the risks associated with this issue (Duwe, 2004). The research need for the psychology of fame and celebrity is globally recognized, thus stimulating the organization of seminars and conferences in many countries. Numerous universities and institutes are also conducting research in this area (see Figure 4 for universities and institutes in developed English-speaking countries active in research in this area).

⁵ Instagram™ is a trademark of Instagram Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. По решению Роскомнадзора, социальная сеть Instagram полностью заблокирована в России как экстремистская организация.

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Not only do these countries have globally influential celebrities, but there is also a deep scholarly understanding of celebrity culture (Brockington, 2015; Holmes et al., 2019).

The study's findings reveal a gradual increase in research on fame and celebrity from 1928 to the end of the 20th century, indicating a growing recognition of its significance over time. The number of articles published in this field was initially less than 25 per year but has now exceeded 100 articles per year. This steady growth suggests that various aspects of this phenomenon have been explored, addressing the question about the current status of fame. Furthermore, the citation rate of these articles has significantly increased, highlighting the importance of this topic today. In 2021, there was a notable spike in citations, with approximately 4,500 citations, indicating a significant rise compared to the previous year. This ongoing growth indicates that multiple facets of fame and celebrity have been investigated, providing insights into its present state.

Regarding the future of fame, the analysis reveals a gap in psychological research, particularly in terms of theoretical exploration. Keywords such as "map" and "theory" are noticeably absent, indicating a need for more cohesive works to develop theories in this area. It is expected that psychology will focus on producing research that delves into theoretical frameworks, both at the micro and macro levels, to further understand and analyze the phenomenon of fame.

There are various factors contributing to the phenomenon of limited theoretical exploration in the field of fame and celebrity. One possible factor is the lack of collaborative efforts among experts in this field, as indicated by the authors' collaboration map. Additionally, insufficient interdisciplinary work may hinder researchers from gaining a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Therefore, one of the objectives of scientific advancement in this field should be to encourage interdisciplinary investigations, particularly across different countries and cultures, which can greatly contribute to knowledge development (Franssen, 2020). Celebrity studies is a developing interdisciplinary field that utilizes diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks to investigate celebrity cultures and the range of perspectives surrounding the topic. This interdisciplinary approach has the potential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of fame and its impact on society (Xu et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The research process in the field of psychology of fame and celebrity is expanding and deepening day by day, as is evident. For scientific societies around the world, that is essential as it contributes to the scientific findings in this field. The findings of our research can provide valuable insights for future studies and serve as guidance for researchers and professionals. For instance, future research is expected to focus more on social media, given the significant impact it has on human life.

However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations in this article. Firstly, the review only includes articles from the Scopus database, potentially overlooking important works from other databases. Therefore, it is recommended to consider

additional sources to gain a more comprehensive perspective on the subject. Secondly, the increasing number of articles published in this field may be attributed to the overall rise in scientific publications across various domains. This trend highlights the growing importance of bibliographic research in different scientific fields.

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